

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

**QUESTION ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2014 - 2015**

Outcome: Schools and Youth

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ15-000078

Senator Wright, Penny asked on 05 March 2015, Hansard page 20

Education - Fourth report: academics and free schools

Question

Senator WRIGHT: Perhaps in the response to the question on notice you could just indicate in relation to each of those whether there is—

Mr Cook: About disadvantage?

Senator WRIGHT: a clear link—or a clear 'causal relationship'—between the independent public school aspect of it—which you are choosing to call 'autonomy', but I think it is bigger than that—and, particularly, students of disadvantage.

Mr Cook: Happy to do that.

Senator O'NEILL: Especially—

CHAIR: Sorry, I think you have had a good hit out, Senator O'Neill.

Senator WRIGHT: I will just finish on that report, given that you were not aware of it—it is only a recent one. Would you also take the opportunity to have a look at it and to provide a response to it, please.

Mr Cook: Sure—happy to do that.

Answer

The British Government's response to the *Education – Fourth Special Report: Academies and Free Schools 2014–15* paper states 'according to the research that we have seen, it is too early to judge whether academies raise standards overall or for disadvantaged children.'

The paper says that there is a complex relationship between attainment, autonomy, collaboration and accountability.

The paper also acknowledges that the landscape of schooling in England has been transformed over the last five years. Recent UK Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills ratings indicate that there are more good schools in England than ever before. The paper concludes that it is time and research that will improve understanding of which factors have contributed most to this improvement.

It is too early to provide evidence of the impact of the Independent Public Schools initiative as it was only launched in 2014 and first year progress reports from participating jurisdictions were due to the department between the end of April and the middle of June of this year.